

Washington D.C. – Rep. Kurt Schrader (D-05) and Rep. Peter Defazio (D-04) announced today that \$6.4 million of the remaining 2008 salmon disaster relief money will be coming to Oregon fishers to help them through this year's closure of the commercial salmon season.

“The closure of the salmon season is a huge blow to the fishing industry in my district. I am pleased NOAA decided to reallocate funds from the 2008 disaster money so that our fishing communities can weather this storm,” DeFazio said. “Short-term assistance is critical so that folks can make boat payments, insurance payments, mortgage payments and keep food on the table in this already struggling economy, while we continue to work on a long-term solution.”

“I’m pleased that NOAA made the decision to reallocate the 2008 salmon money. This funding is critical for our coastal communities which rely so heavily on fishing,” said Schrader. “Today’s decision will ensure that Oregon fishers can receive some measure of immediate relief while I work with my colleagues in Congress to secure additional funds for the 2009 disaster, while we continue to work for a sustainable solution allowing fishing to continue.”

Of the \$170 million originally appropriated for the 2008 salmon disaster, Oregon received \$26.7 million to provide direct financial relief to fishers and other businesses impacted by the closure. After the 2008 money was dispersed, Oregon was left with \$1.3 million. This \$6.4 million includes the remaining \$1.3 million plus \$5.1 million from other states bringing Oregon to 40% of the 2008 allocation that will be distributed by the Pacific States Marine Fisheries Commission.

NOAA’s decision came in response to an April 9, 2009 letter sent by Congressmen Schrader, Defazio and the rest of the Oregon Congressional delegation to Commerce Secretary Gary Locke calling for an extension of the 2008 disaster period. The letter also asked that the Secretary to reallocate the remaining funds between the affected states based on current need.